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A Preliminary Report on *An Etymological Study of Selected Synonyms in Iranian Languages*

イラン語群抜粋同義語語源研究に関する予備報告

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Abstract

This is a preliminary report on a research project with the aim of compiling and publishing an authoritative reference work in the field of Iranian linguistics. The prospective book will not only be important for Iranian linguistics in particular, but also important for Indo-European linguistics in general.

Keywords: Persian, Iranian Languages, Indo-European Languages, Etymology

Iranian languages form one of the oldest and largest branches of the Indo-European language family. The oldest attested Iranian language is Avestan dating back to sometime around the mid-2nd millennium BC, and the most widely spoken new Iranian language is Persian, the official language of Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. There are also a large number of Iranian languages spoken among minority groups from Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and the Caucasus in the west to Pakistan and Chinese Xīnjiāng (新疆) in the east. The study of Iranian languages is not only important for Iranian linguistics in particular, but also important for Indo-European linguistics in general.

What I am going to present here is a preliminary report on a research project which will take effect provided that sufficient research grants can be obtained. The aim of the project is to compile and publish a reference book in the field of Iranian linguistics which will bear the title *An Etymological Study of Selected Synonyms in Iranian Languages*. It will, in fact, follow in the footsteps of the pioneering work of Carl Darling Buck (1949, *A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages: A Contribution to the History of Ideas*, The University of Chicago Press). The prospective book will not only function as a dictionary of synonyms in Iranian languages, but also as an etymological study of a selected number of Iranian words. The book is intended to be an authoritative reference work in a compact and convenient format. It is intended to contain about 1,000 entries (nouns, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, verbs, etc), grouped by topic, from the most common and basic vocabulary of Persian and the other principal Iranian languages.

Under each Persian entry, synonymous words in the principal Old, Middle, and New Iranian languages are given first. These words are either quoted from reliable sources or obtained from fieldwork. The etymological and semantic discussion which will then follow, reveals how these words are related to other Indo-European or non-Indo-European languages, what ideas lie behind them, how they have changed, etc.

Each entry in *An Etymological Study of Selected Synonyms in Iranian Languages* will follow the following format:

1. Persian word
2. English meaning
3. Known equivalents in the principal Old Iranian languages: Avestan, Old Persian (spoken before the 3rd century BC)
4. Known equivalents in the principal Western Middle Iranian languages: Parthian, Manichaean Middle Persian, Zoroastrian Middle Persian (spoken before the 8th century AD)
5. Known equivalents in the principal Eastern Middle Iranian languages: Bactrian, Khotanese, Sogdian, Chorasmian (spoken before the 14th century AD)
6. Known equivalents in the principal Western New Iranian languages: Abuzeydābādi, Balōchi, Behdini of Yazd, Davāni, Gazi, Gilaki, Gōrāni, Khānsāri, Khuri, Kumzāri, Kurdish, Kurmānji, Laki, Lāri, Lori, Māzandarāni, Minābi, Sangsari, Sivandi, Tāleshi, Tāti, Vafsi, Zāzāki
7. Known equivalents in the principal Eastern New Iranian languages: Munjāni,Ormuri, Ossetic, Parāchi, Pashtō, Sanglichi, Shughni, Wakhi, Yaghnōbi, Yazghulāmi, Yidgha
8. Etymological and semantic discussion

What follows is a sample entry in *An Etymological Study of Selected Synonyms in Iranian Languages*:

Persian: **sag** (سگ) ‘dog’

Old Iranian

Avestan: **gaδβa-**, **span-**, **sūn-** (Bartholomae: 489, 1610)

Old Persian: ***saka-** (Nyberg: 172)

Western Middle Iranian

Parthian: **ispag** (Durkin-Meisterernst: 86)

Manichaean Middle Persian: **sag** (Durkin-Meisterernst: 306)

Zoroastrian Middle Persian: **sag** (MacKenzie: 73)

Eastern Middle Iranian

Bactrian: **koδo** (Sims-Williams: 224)

Khotanese: **śvān-**, **śśuvān-** (Emmerick: 198)

Sogdian: **’kwt-(y)**, **kwty** (Gharib: 33, 202)

Choresmian: **kt** ‘female dog’ (Benzing: 364)

Western New Iranian

Abuzeydābādi: **esba** (Mazra’ati: 71), **espa** (Lecoq: 18)

Balōchi of Marw: **kučak**, **tūlā** (Elfenbein: 45, 76)

Behdini of Yazd: **sva** (Mazdā-Pur: 37)

Davāni: **sag** (Salāmi: 494)

Gazi: **kué** (*Iranica*)

Gilaki of Rašt: **sag** (Christensen: 287)

Gōrāni: **tutä** (Benedictsen: 127)
 Khānsāri: **esba, espa** (Tasbihi: 10)
 Khuri: **sag, seg** (Farahvaši: 11, 67)
 Kumzāri: **so:ɤ** (Aljahdhami: 28)
 Kurdish of Mahābād: **sag** (Kalbāsi: 177)
 Kurmānji: **se** (Chyet: II/227)
 Laki of Delfān: **sag** (Izad-Panāh: 77)
 Lāri: **sag** (Kamioka: 17)
 Lori of Boyer-Ahmad: **sag** (Moqimi: 145)
 Māzandarāni of Sāri: **sag** (Šokri: 309)
 Minābi: **say** (Barbera: 217)
 Sangsari: **espe** (author's fieldwork)
 Sivandi: **espa** (*Iranica*)
 Tāleši of Tālešdulā: **esba, espa** (Abdoli: 136, 334)
 Tāti of Harzan(d): **esbā, isbā** (Kārang: 48, 63)
 Vafsi: **esbe** (author's fieldwork)
 Zāzāki: **kūtik** (*Iranica*)

Eastern New Iranian

Munjāni: **γālf** (Grierson: 113)
 Ormuri: **sp^ak, spuk** (Grierson: 113)
 Ossetic: **kuj** (Christensen: 124)
 Parāchi: **spay, spō, kučuk** (Morgenstierne: 18)
 Pashtō: **spai** (Morgenstierne: 18)
 Sanglichi: **kuō** (Morgenstierne: 18)
 Shughni: **kud, kut** (Morgenstierne: 18)
 Wakhi: **šač** (Morgenstierne: 18)
 Yaghnōbi: **kut** (author's fieldwork)
 Yazghulāmi: **k^wɔd** (Narin: 37)
 Yidgha: **γalv** (Morgenstierne: 18)

Etymological and semantic discussion

1. Most of the Iranian words for ‘dog’ go back to the Proto-Indo-European word **k_uuón-, *k_uón-, *k_{un}-, *k_uṇ-* (Wodtko, Irslinger, and Schneider: 436), which is widely attested in other Indo-European languages, e.g. Armenian **šun**, English **hound**, Greek **κύων**, Latin **canis**, Lithuanian **šuō**, Old Irish **cū**, Russian **cyka** ‘female dog’, Sanskrit **śvan-**, and Tocharian **ku** (Mallory and Adams: 138):

Avestan **span-, sūn-** < Proto-Indo-European **k_uón-, *k_{un}-*

Persian **sag** < Old Persian **saka-* < Proto-Iranian **spaka-* < Proto-Indo-European **k_uṇ-ko-*

Also from the same root are: Parthian **ispag**, Manichaean Middle Persian/Zoroastrian Middle Persian/Davāni/Gilaki of Rašt/Kurdish of Mahābād/Laki of Delfān/Lāri/Lori of Boyer-Ahmad/Māzandarāni of Sāri **sag**, Khotanese **śvān-, śśuvān-**, Abuzeydābādī/Khānsāri/Tāleši of Tālešdulā **esba, espa**, Behdini of Yazd **sva**, Khuri **sag, seg**, Kumzāri **so:ɤ**, Kurmānji **se**, Minābi **say**, Sangsari **espe**, Sivandi **espa**, Tāti of Harzan(d) **esbā, isbā**, Vafsi **esbe**, Ormuri **sp^ak, spuk**, Parāchi **spay, spō**, Pashtō **spai**, Wakhi **šač** (originally ‘female dog’, from **swa-čt-*)

Some other words from the same root: Median **spaka-* (**σπάκα** in Herodotus: I/110), Bakhtiyāri of Āl-e Mahmud **say, si** (Madadi: 157), Tāleši of Lenkorān **sepa** (Abdoli: 136), Tāti of Keringān **pā** (Kārang: 48)

2. Some of the Iranian words for ‘dog’ go back to the Proto-Iranian word ***kuta-**, ***kutī-** (Эдельман: IV/413):

Bactrian **koḏo**, Choresmian **kt**, Sogdian **’kwt-(y)**, **kwty**, Balōchi of Marw **kučak**, Gazi **kué**, Zāzāki **kūtik**, Ossetic **kuj**, Parāchi **kučuk**, Sanglichi **kuḏ**, Shughni **kud**, **kut**, Yaghnōbi **kut**, Yazghulāmi **kʷəd**

Some other words from the same root: Anāraki **kuya** (Sohrbi-ye Anāraki: 171), Eastern Balōchi **kšik** (Grierson: 113), Keshe’i **kūva** (Christensen: 21)

3. The following Iranian words for ‘dog’ originally referred to ‘a young dog’ and etymologically meant ‘young’. They are related to the Avestan word **tauruna-** ‘delicate; young’, from the Proto-Indo-European word ***teru-** ‘delicate, tender, fragile, weak’ (Pokorny: 1070), from the root ***ter-** ‘to rub’ (Mallory and Adams: 490):

Balōchi of Marw **tūlā**, Gōrāni **tutā**

Some other words from the same root: Gōrāni of Kandula **tīl**, **tuta** (MacKenzie: 121), Gōrāni of Zangane **tū’leh** (Benedictsen: 127)

4. The following Iranian words for ‘dog’ go back to the Avestan word **gaḏḡa-** (Bartholomae: 489):
Munjāni **γālf**, Yidgha **γalv**

5. miscellaneous words:

Behdini of Yazd **ašu** (Mazdā-Pur: 37; original meaning ‘righteous’ < Middle Persian **ašō** < Avestan **ašauuan-**), Eastern Balōchi **bīg** (Grierson: 113), Kurdish of Sanandaj **daí** ‘female dog’, **gamāl** ‘male dog’ (MacKenzie: 93, 95)